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MOODS OF MANHATTAN

LOUISE MALI INCKRODT KUEFFNER

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MOODS OF MANHATTAN

Manhattan, O City,
You I sing—
This song, for you!

MOODS OF MANHATTAN

BY

LOUISE MALLINCKRODT KUEFFNER

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FURLONG

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A Continent's Outpost, The Citadel, and Midsummer Storm, are adapted translations from a poem, Manhattan, by Emil Reeck.

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A CONTINENT'S OUTPOST

Manhattan,
City—

A lynx, crouched forward,
You lie at watch on the threshold
Of the new world.

You stretch out grasping claws
Around bulged flanks
Of nearing ships,
And the flanks quiver;
Thus you gather in your proud cargoes.

You are the portal
Through which they go
Who are dead to the old world.

In your building-mazes
Frost-nipped blood congeals.
Yet sometimes, bursting,
It flares up in grotesque madness,
Wills life,

But then sinks back into night,
Is docile again.

November-pale are men
Within your reaches,
Manhattan,
For you are
Fear, millionfold, immeasurable
Fear!

Ever bolder
You throw steel arches, stone beams
Across yawning clefts; fear not:
The continent lets not go of you!
No! never will he leave you to the seas;
His hungry clutch holds you
Close;
He needs you!
So vault your bridges
Over his rivers,
With tunnels gird yourself to the mainland,
Calmly,
Manhattan
O City!

THE CITADEL

Manhattan,
Closeknotted knob of gaping valleys, waterways, park!
Deep into dark earth
Your teeming life
You send down;
And into high air
Towers you lift
Carrying up life.

Dizzy-deep abysses are the streets of your citadel, Island,
Where a sunblind world
Knows only lucre, braying, and haste!
Here barter
Masters men;
Usury,
Hard outbargaining.
And a whole land bows to you.
City,
Keen-witted outbargainer,
O Manhattan!

THE ISLAND'S ROUND

Manhattan,
Vibrating City,
Who have begun to disclose to me your million-foldness,
Now I stagger. Where is your unity,
Monstrous City?
I know your great buildings, each is a town self-centred, where you spend workheavy days high up in the air, and down, down in earth's darkness;
Your slums and Riversides and universities are worlds sundered, what bridge will ever connect these?
You wreck palaces for a whim, and preserve tumble-down tenements reeking, renting them out to men;
O your transcendent wealth eludes all but a few, city of greed!
(The misery of your poor, how stupendous, the happiness of your rich, how uncertain!)
City, amorphous city,
I am lost in your maze,
You terrify me, O monstrous City!
How can I believe in you,
Manhattan?

But, City, I will not let you master me:
And see, now in a few hours I have sailed all around you;
You are not so ungraspable after all—
Now I have seen the whole of your long narrow body, held round by your rivers; your eager towns close-clustering about you, bridges and tubes holding you fast to them; and I have followed from end to end the sweeping lines of your ridges.
The vague mass of you no longer eludes me.

Your eastern side is your back yard; here are endless dumping-barges where men handle the City's ill-smelling refuse day after day, unloading it out of wagons, shoveling it into the water.
Here, too, are the buildings where your broken ones come to you sick in body and soul;
(And now we pass the islands where you hide from us your criminals and your maddened ones,
O I will not look at these islands, surely,
O city, some day your life will become free of these!)
Here, also, are your many begrimed coal-barges, where white men work themselves black, (but see, on the cabin's roof there, a pink geranium is blooming.)

(O must it be, this underworld Hell?
That some of us may live,
Praising glad skies with uplifted face,
While we forget, forget?)

But now at last we have turned into your smaller
River and into the Canal that leads us to the
free-souled River of your front side, O City,
O Joy—
Green hillsides refresh us, and on a reef sprawling
into your coolness, broad-breasted River,
white-limbed bathers exult.
And now the ridge-line of your apartment-blocks
and towers billows in unbroken sweep toward
your citadel, and descends abruptly into the
sea.
The separated buildings have grouped themselves
together, and out of your bluish-gray vapor
that thins upward into clear sky,
Your solid Reality,
O City,
Transformed,
Dreams itself into our blood
Sun-quivering
Yet haze-softened,
A vision of delicate Joy!
A unity now, nature's work—though man's—
Her dream, her transcendent flower,

A City of Souls!

O City, never can I deny your evil—
And yet, and yet,
I believe forever
In your Beauty
And in you,
O social
City.

STROLLS

Joy is in my heart,
Manhattan,
When I stroll
From Plaza to Washington Square
Down your proud Avenue.
Palaces
Bring dreams, fleeting,
Of Moorish night, of Italian days;
But soon shops
With bright windows
Offer feasts
To my eyes
My hungry, happy eyes.
Flowers from far climes greet me,
Flowers from the country,
And flowers grown large and rare
Through man's cherishing.
Here the Orient's treasures
Of rugs and vases, carvings and jewels call.
And now confections beckon:
Overgarments curiously fashioned into ever different shapes;
Undergarments delicate dreams of silks and laces and frills;
And fabrics, just fabrics,

Velvets and silks, all textures and shades,
Yellows and blues, oranges, purples, greens, and reds—
O happy happy eyes
That can turn away from the drab of streets
To this world of desire,
My City!
But now I come to a gray wedge-tower
That stands where your rival crosses you, Avenue,
And there, where another fairer tower
Looks down on a green space,
Soap-box speakers declaim.
Treasure them, City, speak they foul or fair:
For here is the germ and promise
Of your Freedom, City!
Yet I follow you on, Avenue,
To where you pass under the arch
To your fountain
In Washington Square.
O fountain
Symbol forever
Of your freshness of life
Your circulating life
Dear City!

But
When I come
O City

To where your furrowed steel tracks tremble along the ground;
And the bold brutal bray of autos breaks into one's soul;
Where stairways climb up, dig down
To trains, trains bellowing, shrieking,
Trains incessant, filled ever, spewing out men, swallowing men,
Here
O City
My laughter
Dies always;
And when I pass through the streets of your slums,
Streets sombre and sordid, between tenements crumbling, reeking;
Streets teeming,
Where pushcarts offer unbeautiful cargoes,
Stockings, cravats, and shoestrings; tidies, ribbons, and laces; candies, pickles, dried fish:
Things tawdry, or crude, or unwholesome;
And O when I pass the room light-glaring, bare,
Where men and women sit homeless, packed close, through the long night's hours,
Sprawling on chairs, on the floor,
Dozing
Head-heavy—
When I hear this,
When I see this,

Sad City
Hard City—
Within me
My laughter
Dies—
O strange City—

Down from your uptowering Pride,
O City,
I look, at sunny noon, upon the wriggling
Whitespecked black mass
Nervous with life, each little life,
So far below.
Then I plunge into Broadway's swirl myself.
I am drawn into Liberty Street's narrow cleft, into the cool shaded darkness there;
I cross black streams that rush madly toward the nation's gambling-whirl;
And I emerge suddenly out of the dark, the citadel's dark, the dark of the last sky-seeking sentinels—
For here, where two streets flow eastward together, are breadth, and openness, and time—
Low tumbledown houses of long ago loiter down to the River's docks:
And would you believe it? Here, where the windows are grimiest, a windowbox sends up green to the sky!

A big ship's lure has brought me to the River. O
different world! Where are hurry and roar?
A man's world: the women you meet you can count
on one hand.
Here is the seaman's easy unhurried swing and his
friendly surfeit of time.
He sees you stop and look about; at once his bored
eyes brighten. Which car is it you want?
will you not come and finish your walk
with him? have something to eat, come to
a picture-show—he tries all his lures, and the
clustered loiterers look on interested—he's a
Socialist, off to-morrow for Italy, don't you
want to have a talk with a seaman?
But, since you really will leave him, he'll go for a
sleep in the seamen's home—
(O hunger, great is your hunger, lonely City.)
In a moment I am back in Broadway's rumbling un-
sociable swirl—
But there, O see the gay fruit-stands—
And that man selling toy canaries, whistling their
shrill trill into the roar—
Not even here,
O busiest City,
Has man forgotten his play,
And his dream's song!

When Night,

Hoping to still your blood's tingling,
Falls upon you,
City,
You flash forth defiance.
Before you can say: Let there be light!
—Light is! Light, light!
Dazed, forgetting the traffic,
Heeding not, hearing not
Policemen's whistles,
I stumble forward
Into your golden
Circle of magic
Times Square!
There, high up, a kitten plays with a spool of red
silk,
Entangles itself, lands on its back, wiggles its tail,
Gets on its feet; and no wiser, begins again
The same sport, hour after hour, night after night.
Here light-sprites brighten into life,
Swing and bend arms and legs, salute, vanish;
While the fountains on either side pearl into light-
drops
Unceasingly.
O, there—
Golden cupids hold high
A redrose garland
With silver swing—
A silver lady, tossing long silver hair,

Swings
Up—down-up, down-up—
O glad Lady Life—
Swing on!
O lusty Lady Life,
So I too
Swing
Forever—
Up—
Down—up—
Down—
Back up—
Forever
Up!
But ah, where the deathless butterfly hovers over its
pink rose,
Drinking light-honey, sated never—
O here I linger,
With this image of life-lovers, poets,
In your fairyland world,
Poet-City!

Theatres are over, even the midnight frolics, and
cafés are closed.
I pass through the great park.
The City's jewel-bespangled dress still flashes,
But the gems blink dimly through the softening haze.
Then sleep kisses them into darkness,

The haze weaves its spell upon the City:
Her unharmonized contrasts
Have found their healer.
She takes her brief rest.
But the lights above
In the deep sky
Shine on.
The world has found them again:
They glisten
While you sleep
Dream-City!

THE VILLAGE

Manhattan,
City of Death, and of Life,
Of fear and of faith—
Of tongues, of creeds,
Of worlds within worlds—
Tolerant, social, intense, aspiring,
I love you, eager City!

Down here in your lowland,
In your Village, the oldest of your worlds,
Sappocanican,
(Gitche Manitou's outpost
Of his continent's
Happy
Hunting-grounds),
I, your lover, your singer,
In my Cavern's long corridor close to the teeming soil, held round by walls and walls, gloat gleefully:
Pulsing your life,
Your millionfold bloodbeat of man to man!

The Village is you in small.
Here are worlds within worlds.

This is no rectangular city;
Single names follow streets around corners,
And streets, once parallel, run right into one another.
High clean modern apartment buildings look down
On cosy old brick houses of few stories,
And on besmutched walkup tenements
Where hordes of rough children
Play and brawl on the dirty street.

Along the Great River, opposite docks and piers,
saloons call at every step;
Men and women loaf their souls away, they heed
not
The beckoning freedom of the river's wide view.

Your Italian world teems exuberant—
Dirt, children, vendors, musicians;
But close to a playground once a cemetery
A Library offers refuge from too much life.

And here in your heart,
Mushroom cafés gay and grotesque
Offer light, offer life,
And discussion,
To youth that has not found itself,
To dreamers,
To the homeless, the restless, the eager, the seeking—
Men are happy in soft collars and bright ties;

Women are happy in loose tunics and hair bobbed—
They talk and dream and dance and love—

Village of unharmonized contrasts,
Thus sounds your slogan:
Live, and let live!

LEARNING'S HILL

Glad and free beats my uplifted heart
When out of the subway's dark brutal roar
I find myself before your fountains, Columbia, gracious mother,
Mother gracious to those who come to you for learning's life!
Freed is my soul of hardness and soil
As I step up the broad approach to your pillar-fronted dome.

Stately, serene is this dome that harbors your books of men.
Though it is lower than the study-buildings, clustering about it amid the green,
And lower far than the upscraping apartment-buildings beyond these—
Yet it is vaster than they.
Set on the hill with its soul-freeing view, the pillars and dome bring dreams to us here of old Greek and Roman dreams,
Dreams that we need, of breadth, and detachment, and harmony's calm, and our Mind's undying joys.

Surely serenity dwells here, and devotion to learning's cause.

Yet is it so?

I wonder—I look at the men and women that I see here, and I listen to the words they speak.

These men and women I see do not look soiled or untidy or over-colored;

Fresh young men; girls neatly dressed; no one is boisterous or loud.

And yes, there are older faces, men, and women, many women, lined faces, and heads not upraised. Well-mannered, quiet-voiced, they loiter or hasten by, intent.

No, this is not buoyancy; eyes do not sparkle; voices do not ring with enthusiasm, enthusiasm—why not? why not?

For here are those who are free to study, free to explore and to dream with the world's earnest prophets. Hunger is not their scourge, and the day's long drudgery not their dulling master.

But listen to these two women, gentle, attractive, one young, and one older—"points," "points," this is the word that strikes the ear; all their words cluster around this one, spoken again and again; (curious, are "points" the spur and reward for study, here?)

Over there are two men and a woman on a bench; I linger here, too, pretending to read a book. She: "He was the most illuminating and honest Professor I ever had. It's a pity he had to leave." The younger man: "Well, I guess he shattered too many hometown illusions. Of course the other Professors aren't so interesting, but one has to have a degree. So we keep on coming, don't we?" She: "Well, when I have *my* degree I shall study for pure joy anywhere." The older man: "O pshaw, what's the use of working oneself tired over those old facts anyway. I *am* tired of it all. I wonder whether I shall really get a better salary when I have my degree." I continue my walk.

Here is a group of young men. "Hurrah," one shouts, tosses a book up in the air and catches it; "I passed my exam, boys; goodbye old book, I'm glad I'm through with you."

And now I catch up with a young man and a young girl who look interested in each other, I hear her warm voice, "You *must* read Hegel's Philosophy of History and Croce's book on Hegel. That Hegelian solution of opposites is great. What he says about the antithesis of good and evil, and the higher synthesis, is wonderful. It connects with life,

too, and makes one understand things better." He: "Which Professor recommended the books? Is his course interesting?" She: "O, I found them when I was browsing about in the Library. But our history Professor did mention Hegel, and he had the books put on the reserve shelf. O, I just love to browse in the Library." I pass on.

After all, gracious mother, Columbia, learning's mother, you are Life's mother in truth, for those that seek!

And when I find myself again by your fountains, and step down your hill back to the subway's roaring dark,

I carry within me the vision of your dome, stately, serene, this dome that harbors the records of men's throbbing minds,

Records electric to those who are electric; and who know

That Learning and Life are not foes, but bosom friends,

Forever!

WITH THE OBELISK AT SUNRISE

Manhattan,
City of the Present,
Who reach so avidly
For the future, and the new,
Yet you do not forget
The old:
In your Park your great Museum is full of things
vital, once, to ages that have passed:
Here you connect with the dead and make their
dreams vital again for yourself.

You have loved above all, I think, the world's old
wonderland of the Nile, its riddle, the lore
of its temples and tombs;
Rich are your Egyptian rooms; but the greatest of
all its symbols of life
You have placed outside your walls, in the free air,
where it belongs.
Here it stands alone, the brown obelisk, on its stone
platform raised, this greeting from the old
old world to the new,
This greeting from Egypt to you, America, through
your City, Manhattan!
Here in this land of fogs it is touched by the rising
sun's rays

Even as it was touched so long ago in that brown
desert-land with its unfailing sun,
Man's ever-returning god!

Here by the obelisk I stand, it is Spring; I am wait-
ing with the obelisk to greet you, my Beloved,
O my father Sun!
The city's roar is asleep; and in the stillness your
infinite golden hands reach up into the gray,
and you come, golden ball:
You touch gladdened leaves all over the park; you
touch the robin that hops about on the plat-
form, and he chirps up; and you touch me;
But first of all you have touched the obelisk where
it stands slender and straight, this symbol of
your creating Life.
O Sun, are you indeed the reviving sun? but what,
what are you: a beetle rolling his golden egg
from the East—
A falcon with wide wings outspread— a bull, or a
hawk? or an all-seeing Eye?
A god sailing fleetly in your golden barque?
Or just a great disk with myriad loving hands to lay
upon men, all men?
Or are you the goldglowing Rose of the World?
O, you are all these—one sun—yet different for
each dreamer—

But life for all!

So I greet you Sun, and I greet you, City,
Beginning anew,
O Sun,
And O Sun-gladdened City,
Your cycles ever-recurrent,
Of life, of life!

For, listen:

The Day's young Hunger has opened its mouth,
It is whistling, braying for its food, its more than
food,
Demanding its dues, (why not?)
Of you,
O mother City!

NIGHT HUNGER

The day's occupations done,
Thousands and thousands
Of workers,
Of loafers,
Turn themselves loose upon life.

Has any city more eating-places?
Does anyone eat at home?
Dignified hotel restaurant, light-dimmed cabaret with music and dancing, basement table d'hote, cafeteria, automat,
Which will you have?
And which cookery calls you to-night?
French or Italian, Chinese, Turkish, Hungarian? or just plain American?
Eat and enjoy!

Having eaten, which show will you choose?
Theatre, opera, movie, vaudeville, concert?
Does cosmopolitan Broadway entice you? or Fourteenth Street, the humbler man's wonderland? or the never-weary Yiddish world, Second Avenue?

Or will you go to a lecture? a mass-meeting, a
studio-talk?
What city has more lectures, more night-schools?
Hither ever more thousands,
Hunger-driven, by body-hunger, by soul-hunger,
Come for the wisdom
That is magic!

Or shall we go to the Library's great reading-room?
Here the living, silent, eager, learn from those
That are dead; but the dead are not dead,
And with the living their spirits go forth
Into your life, O sociable City!

City of wealth,
Triumphant you lure us all;
Untiringly you pour gifts
Out of your great cornucopia,
Prodigal City;
And we worship you,
City of Promise.

AUTUMN'S HOPE

Grayness has held us round, yet the City's life
throbs;
Its year has begun!
Autumn's red world, without, we have left.
O gray birds that haunch yourselves upon the gray
tower there—
You are my soul's birds haunched here amid hun-
ger and pain,
Forgetting the dream of southlands—and flight—
For richer than cloversweet fields are men's hopeful
hearts,
And this is the City's
Season of hope!

See how the young of the land flock hither, fled
from small town's thraldom or family's over-
close care!
Schools open, lectures and concerts begin, the pub-
lic forums in Churches discuss problems of
the day, painting and sculpture exhibit
dreams of color and form, new magazines
plan to reform the world—
And poets find poetry
Everywhere—
Everywhere they live it,

The City's new work, new freedom, new life!

And these are the moving-days—
Happiness-seeking multitudes feather new nests—
surely here it will come to us, they dream,
Let us forget the trial, the failure, the gloom we
have known in the old—
Let us sing!

O see the swinging arms, the buoyant walk
In the crisp air—
The City's hope is aflame,
Its year has begun.

WELCOMING THE YOUNG YEAR

City, how old and gray you look during these last days!
Your gray trees reach bare branches up into a gray sky,
And your lights hide blinking behind gray veils.
Why do you not wear your white winter dress?
Snow, have you decided to scorn the City that treads you into slush, and dumps you away?
Only a few tantalizing flurries you have sent us, a moment's brightening of the city's drab, a moment's whirling into frolic and joy.

Drab and heavy have been these last days; but now, once more the million-hearted City has been expectant like a little child;
For at midnight it is going to shed its old husk, and come forth renewed!
Tonight the Old Year grows young again!

For hours the bands have been playing in the Squares; the million-hearted streets have throbbed;
And now the magic moment has come:
The newborn lusty-lunged giant-child whistles forth her long-sustained shrill notes and deep

notes—
For an instant lights go out, and shine forth again
exuberant;
Then the million-souled throng throws confetti and
toots horns braying and roaring,
And they call out to one another the old glad hope,
Happy New Year, Happy New Year!

For each this is a word of might;
O Joy, to begin all over again,
Our plans, our resolutions, our hopes!
(Happiness, O this year you will surely come to me;
Success—this year I will certainly show you what I
can do;
O this year I will unfailingly rid myself of my
faults!)
Even the homeless throb with your joy tonight,
City renewed!

Nor is the air now heavy and gray,
For the snow has begun to fall in great soft madly-
whirling flakes.
Like children the happy crowds shout, catch the
flakes in their hands and in their mouths,
and let them melt on cheeks and eyes;
Faster and merrier they push themselves down the
long streets.
Ah City, you are going to have your white winter

dress;
The Snow, your godmother, has brought you a token
For your new Life's beginning—
White Purity's birthday gift!

FLOWERDAY BEFORE EASTER

The heralds have come;
High-traveling sunball, white-fleecy blue, clear-lambent air!
They have lured the crowds to the streets.

O, the Spring is everybody's lover.
City or country, what does he care?
He's bound to make everything blossom, flowers and men,
For he loves them! He smiles upon them, caresses them, warms them—
And they unfold!
The preoccupied city crowds forget business
And sun themselves into smiles.

Huge several-tiered wagons unload upon the Square
The countryside's Easter gift to you, City;
And the gray Square changes its hue.
Hyacinths white, blue, and pink—tulips aflame—goldbright daffodils—
And roses, roses, roses.
Wide-open large-petaled roses on sturdy stalks—
Closefolded little pink climbing roses—
And lovely rambler running up a high pole, showering tiny-petaled red blossoms upon a wire-

work disk, dropping through it delicate dancing shadows down upon the sidewalk—
And there, O the ever-appealing tender pansy-faces!
Gay-blossoming Square, to you also
The Magician has come.

The city crowds loaf gaping.
Some carry away with them, proudly, a token, a gift-plant;
Others just gaze; (why do they not buy, I wonder?)
And did they ever watch them grow, do you think, in country gardens, around homes?
But see, one of the men who sell the flowers, has picked up a skyblue lilac-spike;
He looks around and gives it, no not to me, but to the girl standing there;
Not a beautiful girl, not a girl with dreams in her eyes—
But now she smiles—ah, Spring is her lover too!
I wonder what made the flowerman give the flower to her?

SUNDAY ESCAPE

The subways to the Bronx are full, even early;
I too have come out of sunblue day into cavernous
dark, and am brain-jolted into noddiness—
And I too, at last, go forth again;
Reborn into sunblue day, into sungreen day.

Here is the garden of animals.
I see monkeys swing one another by their long tails,
or scratch thoughtful brows;
I receive from gay birds brilliant brightness brought
from all the world;
And I smile at the drab, heavy elephant, who has
grown his questing nose downward, into a
ground-groveling trunk; I smile also at the
giraffe, whose sky-reaching neck lifts his little
head into disdainful upper air—(O material-
ist, O phantast, can you be friends, I won-
der?)

Now I cross a road where autos wheel and wheel
and wheel, out for their giddying mile upon
mile;
O how glad I am, not to be off with them—
O how glad I am
That I may stand here rapt,
As now,

By the dark pointed junipertree,
Bathing my eyes in the swan-pond's, the frog-pond's Opalescene,
While the trees, doubling themselves, dip leafy heads into coolness,
And the swans, snowy sailers, strike forth tracks that widen and widen—
As my thoughts widen, lost, lost
In life's widening richness.

I wander on till I come to the Japanese cherrytrees; here a young Japanese father is photographing a dainty wife with baby-son, white-haloed amid downlooking blossomcups.

Now, near sunset, I am back at the subway, among crowds of gay children glad of golden and red balloons, of bright-whirling paper windmills, and of icecream cones.
How good taste my fried frankfurter and crisp beer, my doughnuts and coffee!
But see, over there a green parrot picks out envelope-fortunes for love-eager girls, and young men—
O Life, joy-promising witch, unweary,
I bow before you,
O generous
All-Giver!

SUMMER'S GREEN REFUGE

Stone-city men have called you,
Manhattan?
But I, your lover, I do not see you thus;
And now, for your sun-stagnant
Reeling
Everbright days,
Let me sing my song
Of your refuge,
O green-tufted City!

And first I will celebrate your great Park, your Riverside, your smaller parks, and your tree-grown Squares;

They are ever-ready playgrounds for all, and they throw greetings to us as we race down busy streets.

Some of your little parks, aristocratic city, you keep locked up for a few, yet they give gay-green joy to us;

While other spots, O careful city, you have barred to all that none may be barred: you give them not to feet, but to eyes where eyes need them most.

When I least expect it, oldfashioned city, you give glimpses of gardens, of green old graveyards

shut in between sky-eager dwellings;
And then you open up visions of fountains and flowers in courts, and on roof-gardens, your dreams of romance, newfashioned city.

Your florists' windows, your displays of fresh vegetables, your fruitstands—let me not forget these: do they not cheer us everywhere?
And always, O inexhaustible city, I can see grassplots on sidewalks, or trees, or tufts of determined green life sprouting up along curbs, or between stones, anywhere!
Or I can see land of the landless, a windowbox, a flowerpot, a tincan! There I saw, once, pansies abloom and a golden canary trilling forth his exuberance; and once I saw morningglories open pink chalices to the sun, where houses are grimiest, climbing skywards from window to window.
Can the country give joy like this?
For into these flowers has gone man's heart-nourished need
Of that world which he feels—O far off—was his mother, once!
And some day his upspringing love will bring her back to him more and more, back to his
City of Souls!

So let them not call my city stone-city;
Let them open their eyes, and their hearts—
And let them find your green refuge
Everywhere,
O my sun-radiant City!

MIDSUMMER STORM

Behind the gates, the ridged cliffs
Of the Great River's palisades,
Glares and glowers
Gitche Manitou,
The Great Spirit
Of a continent's
Happy hunting-grounds.

The White Man
From his cloud-reaching residences
On the Island
Along the River's shore,
Smiles back
Scornfully, calmly.

But Gitche Manitou
Blazes down upon the
White Island Fortress,
From which the White Man
Drove the green forest,
The Red Man.

And now vapor,
Heavy, scorched,
Smudges from the stone boxes,

Wilts to the ground
The bold white invaders.
Smoke-black,
Sulphur-yellow,
Clouds
Ball themselves
Fearfully.
The Great Spirit flashes and growls
And sends down torrents of wild tears,
Driving before him
The mad White Men.
But soon his strength
Passes from him.

And the skyscrapers, uptowering,
Cut clean into the blue sky.
The White Man
Smiles
Calmly,
—Thanking—
The Great Spirit
(O helpless Spirit!)
For the cleared fresh air,
And for life
Renewed.

SUMMERMOON SYMPHONICS

Tonight the full moon will rise upon the City.
O moon, how often I have watched you lift yourself
above hills, above the sea, changing from
dusky red to gold, and to silver's keen calm!
But O moon, held round and round by the city's
high walls, how can I follow, tonight, from
plane to plane,
Your triumphant uprising,
Your struggle away
From haze-heavy earth
To ether-clear sky?

Dreamer, dreamer!
Even now you are jostled and stopped by throngs
congested and brutal;
For the masters' greed and the workers' need are
struggling
Fist to fist,
While traction's traffic is stopped.
Hunger is Master,
He pulls the strings of man's Fate—
O, the brute in us,
The lust in us,
The weariness in us,
The unbelief in us,

Are heavy, heavy.
O man's grim fight—
The dull overpowering need,
The external, the material,
Are heavy, heavy.
But listen—
A faint sweet piping
Arises from out of the din:
A street musician
Dreams
Love—
O so faintly!
Love, music, spirit—
O the strife eternal
Between man's Body
And man's Spirit!

(Music, music is *love*: is it not
Reconciliation
Of separateness,
Of dissonance?
Then give me more
Of music's harmonies.)

Now I have come to the stadium and sit with a listening crowd on the stone steps of the theatre's open half-round:
Above us the sky, and opposite—ah, the dusky red

moon rising above the city's lights!
Beethoven's symphony:
Insistent, the deep slow notes throw out
The eternal theme
Of Fate—
Man's unescapable fate, the struggle of body and soul
Against the powers, the powers—without and within!
And ever the tender pleading for rest, for love, for joy!
How beautiful life is, sings the master, how beautiful life is,
If only we can forget its misery, if only we can use its pain—
O Fate, you cannot master me:
Your hate I will turn into love!
Brother-love,
World-love!
Come, I will dance with you, wildly, wildly!
I'll tussle you about, you helpless old bogey!
I mold you to my use forever.
O life is joy, joy forever!
Joy triumphant,
Joy!

The symphony is over, and now we hear the sprightly turbulence of Weber's invitation to

dance, and the ecstatic abandon of a waltz by Strauss—

Man's spirit has grown light; he dances into rhythm his life's blitheness.

And opposite, see: the dusky red moon, rising, has turned to gold, and rising higher, has grown into silvery joy.

Through earth's haze-heaviness it has struggled triumphant;

It pours down upon earth, upon men,

Life's silvery blitheness,

Love's silvery peace.

CROWDS AND FACES

The song of your crowds and faces, O Manhattan,
Now I sing,
The song of your eyes!
Your eyes, are they not the gauge of your
Life triumphant,
Your joy, your love, and your hunger?

The night has ended, and a bright early hour sees
me swinging along full of the work I am
going to do today; it is my Joy!
But suddenly my soul has gone from me, for I am
caught in the crowds shuttling themselves
over from subway to subway;
O the mad zigzagging, darting, bumping pushing,
whirling! Is this your preparation for your
day's work, Manhattan?
This motion-madness, and then the dumb inertness,
the stifling huddled patience of the train-
traveling millions?
Faces wearied, worried; eyes unvisioned, unsparkling
—is this your gift to morning's joy,
City unhuman, too human?

Those black streams rushing toward the nation's
gambling-whirl down town, all day they keep

moving. Here gain and greed are gods.
O men, and women, I try to read your faces; but they are blank; your pale intentness is without soul, it does not move me, and quickly I leave you.

Now I am on First Avenue, where cart upon cart spreads out vegetables and fruits under yellow-and-gray umbrellas;
Here are ample women, bareheaded, aproned; and many many children; and bearded old men.
They jostle along slowly: admiring, testing, buying, gossiping, eating!

When the Tower in Madison Square sings out noon's fulness, the Avenue sends forth its sweatshop for an hour's freshness.
Pushcarts with bright fruit have wheeled up, while blind and crippled musicians pipe up strange airs on strange instruments.
From the sidewalks the crowds surge over onto the streets. Yet the current that moves them is leisurely: they joke, or talk earnestly, or flirt, or eat, or just sun themselves.
Girls brightly dressed and painted giggle in groups. Other groups collect about speakers, they listen intently, or ask questions, or discuss ardently.

This is an hour of unstrenuous sociable eyes: always it is true, Manhattan, that your poorest pluck gladness out of mere air! For each this hour is fruitful.

Now it is night, and joy overflowing lights up Broadway's theatre-blocks. The day's strain has relaxed its hold.

Bright and radiant we rush for the show that is waiting to add more joy to our evening: faces are fond and glad, and eyes sparkle.

But, Broadway, your sparkling joy pales when I remember the children I have seen in Central Park on Sunday afternoons! Gay wondering flowers they dotted the great green, jumped and danced, flew kites, and sailed toy ships on the pond!

What joy is like the joy of their eyes, the promise of their eyes, the confidence of their eyes,

The love of their eyes?

O City, this is indeed the quintessence of your life!

But no, City, now in a moment I see before me the crowds of your mass meetings; and lighted eyes more wonderful than sweet children's eyes.

When speakers, here, dream for hours of a new

world's freedom, of love, of justice and joy
for all—
Then voices ring out approval; and I see in these
eyes, these patient eyes,
A fervor, a faith
That reveals,
O Manhattan,
Your true Soul,
City of Hope!

OUR TOWER'S BECKONING SIGNAL

O Night, black night, almighty night,
Without moon, without stars,
Lying so low and so dark upon the City,
Do you wish to strangle its life?
But no, you are not almighty.
Now the City is your conqueror;
For see, its lights sparkle up—stars created by man's might more countless than the countless stars you are hiding from us;
They throw their brightness upon your breast and take from us our dark terror.
And far up, beyond the more than fifty unlighted stories, the gleaming tip of the City's high Tower, the quintessence of its electric life, its passionate will,
Has throbbed into shining whiteness, a resplendent jewel for your black robe's adornment, a triumphant signal to seas and lands,
O beckoning heart of my City!

Night, you cannot frighten me, for I myself am this Light; Man's Light of body and soul,
The electric Centre of your dark Womb.
And now I am not down in the street, I am up there, myself our City's signal to the World!

Beneath me the lights—O, the beautiful dance of these fireflies! (we all, we all, are such fireflies)—

Ah no, dark Mother, I do not fear you,
For I and my City are your Soul, your Soul's dream of Life,
Life opalescent, and free, and glad!

And O sparkling City of Souls, of electric Souls,
Down there—
—So many lights; yet one Light—
Our joy it is, to worship the Light,
And our joy it is,
To liberate light, more light,
And to send forth undimmed,
O my City,
Our farbeckoning signal
To the World!

MY SONG'S FAREWELL

Manhattan
City of Life,
To you I drink!

City, O receiver of the hungry who are dead to old
worlds, to unfreedom's constraint,
City, great sea where souls are but drops, glad drops
in your Life:
free drops converging you for themselves;
glad drops merging themselves in your
Life-of-All;
City who are conflict, and conquest, keen former of
men—
Yourself your Centre, your own law, yet sending
feelers
Into every part of our World
And into the Unscanned—

O be our
Dream-Desire,
Our City of Love!

AFTERWORD

O Reader—
When you peruse these moods,
Do not ask, I beg—
Is it prose? is it verse?
Realism—or idealism?
Description, narration, or lyric abandon: which is it,
I wonder?
O, where are the rules, the rules,
Of beat, of pause,
Of pointing?
Of capitals?

Friend
Let me sing to you, merely,
My joy—
My joy in these moods
These manifold moods
Of our Mother
Manhattan!

O Reader,
Farewell—
Until I hail you
anew!

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